

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 3, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
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- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
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- Local Government Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
- Summary of State Resources Committed.

Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell. The weather forecasts project a continuing of the high pressure systems through August and possible into September. **Montana is currently establishing new record fire indices!**

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in effect for specific areas:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. *(This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment)*

The Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) has assigned an Area Command Team (Zimmerman) to help analyze assessments for long duration fires and emerging incidents.

Mile Marker 124 is located 3 miles east of Clinton. The fire is 6,245 acres with 25% containment. Angell's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 382. Structures are threatened. Cause: Under investigation. Traffic restrictions are in place on Interstate 90. Three major power lines have been restored. Cell towers and a aircraft navigational beacon have had their power lines disrupted. Evacuations are in effect in Cramer Creek. Planning is on-going for further evacuations.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest, in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Bennett's and Oltrogge's Type 1 IMT's, transitioning today, are managing this fire. The Meriwether Fire will be managed as a separate incident by Oltrogge's Team. Current size is estimated at 32,000 acres with 33% containment. Personnel Assigned: 232. Cause: Lightning. Evacuations are in effect. Structures remain threatened in Eldorado subdivision, Holter Lake and Beaver Creek. An emergency closure is in place that encompasses the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness Area as well as Coulter Campground along the Missouri River. A River Closure is in place for Upper Holter Reservoir from American Bar Gulch extending north to Beartooth Landing.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. LaFave's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Fire is estimated at 19,680 acres with 20% containment. Personnel assigned: 666. Structures are threatened. Some evacuations have occurred. Cause: Lightning. Red Flag Warning for today. Fire has burned about 1,000 acres on the Blackfeet Nation near Dog Gun Lake.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County being managed by Bennett's Type 1 Team (Whitney's Type 1 Team has been ordered).

Current size is estimated at 40,000 acres. 5% Containment. Personnel Assigned: 385. Structures threatened. Evacuations have occurred. Cause: Lightning. IMT personnel met with local ranchers to discuss constructing contingency control lines on their property.

Sawmill Complex is located on the Lolo NF. The complex includes a total of 4,900 acres with 0% containment and consists of the Sawmill Creek (950 acres), the Wyman #2 (2,400 acres), and the Fisher Point (1,550 acres). Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 297. Cause: Lightning. Structures threatened. Crews are assisting landowners in mitigating areas around their homes.

Chippy Creek, is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Raley's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Size is 7,000 acres. 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 132. Cause: Under Investigation. Structures are threatened. Burning in timber and under story. Extreme fire behavior with crowning and running.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 5,505 acres with 5% containment. Koehler's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 180. Cause: Lightning. Road and recreation site closures. Flathead Co. SO is prepared for possible evacuation of Star Meadows. Flathead County Mobile ICP is on scene.

Rombo Mountain WFU, Bitterroot NF. Eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is being mobilized. Estimated size is 615 acres. Personnel assigned: 67. Burning in timber and under story.

Owl on Yellowstone NP and Gallatin NF. Wilder's IMT2. The Owl Fire is 2,800 acres. 75% contained. Wilder's Type 2 IMT is in command. Personnel assigned: 231. Cause: Lightning.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County is now 21,888 acres. Personnel assigned: 84. Cause: Lightning. Transitioned to a new Incident Commander. Structures are threatened. Evacuations are in place. Resources will implement and test structure protection equipment at Massey Tract and the Teton Pass Ski Area. Further structure protection equipment will be deployed at the Seven Lazy P Ranch.

Garceau on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Transitioned to a Type 3 IMT today. 3,045 acres and 93% contained. Personnel assigned: 299. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass. Structures threatened. Weather moderated yesterday which kept the fire within containment lines.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 4,100 acres with 0% containment. Type 3 Incident Organization. Structures are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 13. Cause: Lightning. Minimal growth yesterday.

Porcupine is located in the Gallatin National Forest, approximately 31 miles north of Livingston. Size is 124 acres at 20 percent contained. Personnel assigned: 20. The fire

is torching and smoldering (with pockets of timber burning out).

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 3,502 acres and 25% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: 55. Cause: Lightning. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping. Last report unless significant activity occurs.

NEW LARGE FIRES (Large fires are fires over 100 acres in size)

Cloudy Day west of Billings. A DNRC county assist. The Cloudy Day Fire burned 171 acres and is 100% contained.

For more information on Montana Fires: <http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>.

III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

A Red Flag Warning has been issued by both the Missoula and Great Falls NWS offices for gusty winds and low humidities!

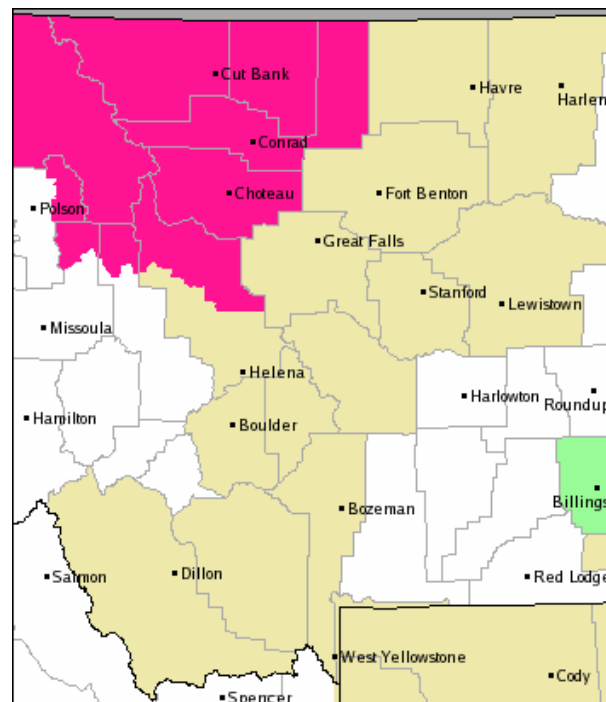
Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

<http://www.weather.gov/>



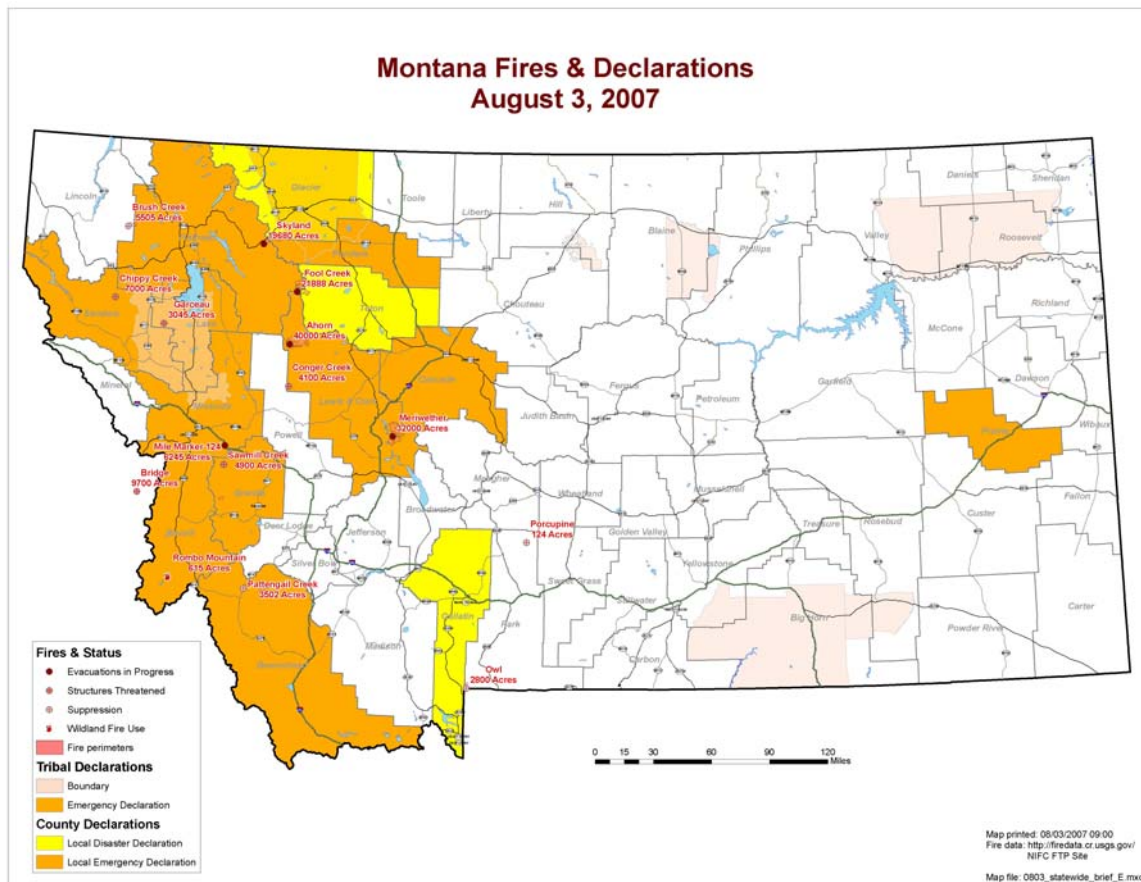
Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf.

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
 Ravalli
 Lake
 Granite
 Cascade
 Missoula

Sanders
 Beaverhead
 Pondera
 Flathead
 Prairie
 Blackfeet Nation

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton
 Glacier

Gallatin

Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.
- The Blackfeet Nation has activated and staffed their Emergency Operations Center (7/30/07).
- The Glacier County Emergency Operations Center was activated on July 30, 2007.
- The Flathead County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Teton County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Pondera County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- MT-DES also has deployed an Agency Representative to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- One Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk module is deployed for initial attack. The Blackhawk and its nine-person module are stationed in Helena.
- A second Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk and module is deployed for initial attack. This Blackhawk and its nine-person module are stationed in Missoula.
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist Bennett's Type 1 Team with fire support on the Ahorn and Meriwether fires. The Chinook and its nine-person module are stationed in Helena.
- A Montana Army National Guard Security Team (26 personnel) has been assigned to the Mile Marker 124 Fire.
- A second Montana Army National Guard Security Team (26 personnel) has been ordered for the Meriwether Fire and were deployed on 8/01/07.
- A third Montana Army National Guard Security Team (26 personnel) has been ordered for the Sawmill Complex and is on duty at the incident.
- A third Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk and module has been ordered to support initial attack efforts at the Northwest Land Office. This Blackhawk and its nine-person module is stationed at the Northwest Land Office (in Kalispell) as of 8/2/07.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was activated and staffed to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900). We remain at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.